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MUSLIMS IN CHINA

BY THE
Rev. Canon SELL, D.D., M.R.A.S.

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GENERAL EDITOR

The Rev. Canon Sell. D.D., M.R.A.S.

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PREFACE

THE subject here dealt with originally appeared under the title 'Islám in China' in my *Essays on Islám* published in 1901. I have revised it in the light of more recent publications, especially the *Recherches sur les Musulmans Chinois* (Paris, 1911) par D'Ollone, A. Vessière, E. Blocket, et de divers Savants. I am informed on good authority that the Tradition on the next page is recorded by Jalálu'd-Dín As-Syúṭí in the *Jámi'u's-Ṣaghír*; but as I have no copy of that book with me, I have not verified it.

EDWARD SELL

COONOOR,
August, 1913.

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P 3989.1

اطلبوا العلم ولو بالصين

Search for knowledge even in China.

Muḥammad.

MUSLIMS IN CHINA

THE famous Arab traveller of the fourteenth century, Ibn Báṭúṭa, in the record of his travels in China, says that in many towns he found Muslims, who dwelt in a separate quarter, apart from the other people, that they had their own mosques, Qáḍís, and other officials, who decided all matters concerning the internal affairs of the community, and that they were honoured and respected by the Chinese.

Professor Vasilyeff, a Russian writer, who has dealt with the subject of Islám in China, as it was some forty years ago, considers that the Musalmáns there form a progressive community, and that the influence of Islám will, in the future, be widely felt. He says: 'If Islám some day succeeds in establishing its political supremacy over China, and then claims the allegiance of the mass of the population to its faith, will it meet with a refusal? We think not.' Whilst there is not much fear that such an ascendancy of Islám in China will ever come to pass, for the days when it can become a successful ruling power in any part of the world are gone for ever, and even in China it has lost ground, still its progress and present position in that land, not so well known as their importance demands, form a subject of great interest both to the politician and the missionary. Excellent modern authorities on it are *Le Mahométisme en Chine*,

by M. Dabry de Thiersant, formerly the French Consul-General in China; and *Recherches sur les Musulmans Chinois*, by Le Commandant D'Ollone and others (Paris 1911). It is to their writings that I am indebted for most of the facts which are here given.

The first Muḥammadans who came to China were Arab merchants. It is said that commercial relations with Arabia existed even before the time of Muḥammad. A traditional account is that the Emperor, Tai Tsong, of the Tang Dynasty, had a dream in the year A.D. 627, in which he saw a soldier, who wore a turban and was followed by a demon, enter a room.[1] The astrologers, having consulted the stars with a view to explain the dream, reported that a holy man was about to be born in the west, that the soldier came from the kingdom of Arabia, that his slaughter of the demon in the dream, showed that the race he belonged to was strong and powerful. The king of Arabia, who was very rich and powerful, was also a saint, at whose birth many marvelous things happened, and, if friendly relations were entered into with him, it would clearly be to the advantage of the empire. The Emperor after due reflection decided to send an ambassador to Arabia with rich presents for the ruler of that country, and a request that a wise man should be sent, who could deal with threatened evils and give rest to the country. Envoys, of whom one Qásim was the leader, then came from Arabia, and the Emperor recognized in one of them the form and appearance of the man he had seen in his dream. On

[1] Gabriel Devéria in *Centenaire de l'École des Langues Orientales Vivantes*, p. 312. (The legend is given in full by Broomhall, *Islám in China*, pp. 64-6; 68-9.)

hearing of the good state of Arabia the Emperor remarked that the teaching of Confucius must have reached that land, to which the envoys replied that it was known to them; but that they had also a sacred book, descended from heaven, called the Qur'án, which was superior to any other religious book in the world, and which contained instruction on matters small and great.[1] Qásim also fully explained the ritual of the namáz and the doctrines of Islám to the great satisfaction of the Emperor who was charmed with Qásim's readiness.[2] The result was that Muslims were welcomed, treated with respect, and allowed to settle at Nankin and Canton,[3] where they built a mosque, called the 'Holy Remembrance'. The leader of this band is called by the Chinese Wang-ka-zi, which means a Companion of the Prophet, or a Ṣaḥábi. M. Dabry de Thiersant states that his Arab name was Wahháb Ibn Abú Kabsháh,[4] that he was an uncle of the Prophet, and that the date of his mission was A.D. 628; but the relationship is not very clear as, according to some accounts, Muḥammad had no uncle. Whoever he was, he was the first Muslim missionary to China. In A.D. 632, he returned to Arabia, but found that

[1] Devéria, p. 314. [2] Ibid., p. 315.

[3] 'Throughout the T'ang dynasty the Mohammedans seem to have been somewhat favourably treated as traders, doubtless on account of the profit accruing to China. They were protected, allowed to build houses and mosques of a different architecture to the Chinese, and were even permitted to live to some extent under their own rulers.' Broomhall, *Islám in China*, pp. 46–7.

[4] In a Chinese *Life of Muḥammad*, written by Liu Chih in A.D. 1721, he is called Sa'd Waqqás. He is said to have died in Canton, but the tradition is of doubtful authority. See Broomhall, *Islám in China*, pp. 74–9.

Muḥammad was dead. He could not remain at home permanently, and so he returned to Canton bringing back with him Abú Bakr's recension of the Qur'án. He then lived and died at Canton, and pious Muslims made pilgrimages to the tomb of the earliest herald of their faith in China.

The Khalífa Walíd in the early part of the eighth century advanced his victorious army to the frontiers of China. The general of his army demanded tribute from the Emperor. The deputation conveying this mandate appeared before the Emperor richly dressed, highly performed, and assumed a soft effeminate appearance. They entered and retired in silence to the great astonishment of the Emperor. The second day they wore rich black robes, and acted in the same manner. On the third day they entered into the Emperor's presence fully armed and fierce of countenance. The Emperor enquired the reason of this strange conduct, and was informed that they first appeared in the dress they wore when visiting ladies, then in court costume, and lastly, clad as when they went forth to meet enemies. The Emperor being much alarmed at this, and at the news which, at the same time, came from the frontier, assented to their demands, and paid the tribute required. About the same time, A.D. 713,[1] an envoy from the Khalífa refused to prostrate himself before the Emperor, stating that, as a Muslim, he bent the knee to God alone. The Chinese officials wished to punish this breach of court etiquette, but the Emperor excused the conduct of the envoy and did not require him to observe the usual

[1] Gabriel Devériá in *Centenaire de l'École des Langues Orientales Vivantes*, p. 307.

ceremonial. As years passed on the Chinese Muslims, as we shall see, became less particular, and conformed to court usage much more readily.

In the year A.D. 758 a band of Muslim soldiers, 4,000 in number, were sent by the Khalífa al-Mansúr from Khurasán to the aid of the Emperor in crushing out a rebellion, raised by a Tartár commander of the Chinese army. The Arab troops defeated the rebels. An alliance between a Khalífa of Baghdád and an Emperor of China seems strange, but their territories were almost or quite adjacent. 'When, in the first century of the Hijra, the famous Muslim General, Qutaiba, crossed the Oxus, took Bukhára and Samarkand and carried fire and sword through Kashgár and beyond Kucha, he was actually on Chinese territory.' [1]

After their work was over, when the Muslim soldiers were ordered to return to Khurasán, they refused and, being assisted by their co-religionists already in China, were able to gain their end. The Emperor had to give them authority to settle in various towns in China. Being compelled by their religious law to marry among themselves, they took as concubines Chinese women, and thus formed a small community from which, in course of time, a large body of Chinese Muslims descended. In some parts, especially near the Tibetan border, the women retain their own religion and often bring up their children as Buddhists,[2] which shows a considerable laxity amongst their Muslims. It does not appear that any great accessions were made by immigration or by conversions. The chief cause of increase was

[1] Stanley Lane-Poole, *Studies in a Mosque*, p. 293.

[2] D'Ollone, *Recherches sur les Musulmans Chinois*, p. 234.

through marriage alliances, regular and irregular, and by the purchase of destitute children who were brought up as Muslims.

In A.D. 794, the Khalífa Hárúnu'r-Rashíd sent ambassadors to China and also assisted the Emperor in his war against the Tibetans. The political relation thus entered into lasted for some centuries.[1] In the ninth century a Muslim author records a conversation which a traveller, named Ibn Wahháb, held with the Emperor regarding the person and work of Muḥammad and the progress of Islám.[2] In A. D. 1068, the Emperor Chin Tsoung appointed a Muslim to the oversight of the Arab strangers who came to Canton. This official distributed them in different places and kept a register of their names. This led to a decrease in their number, and for a while their influence became less, and was not regained till they settled in the provinces. The *Akhbáru's-Sin wa'l-Hind* records the adventures of an Arab traveller about the year A. D. 857. He says that no Chinese had embraced Islám, and that the Muslims lived as a people apart under their own Qáḍís. Ibn Báṭúṭa, who visited China in A. D. 1324, says that in each province there was a town for Muslims, who were apparently in good circumstances.[3]

Le Père Lecomte in 1680 writes: 'The Muslims have been in China six hundred years; they are not

[1] Les relations politiques entre les Arabes et les Chinois continuèrent pendant les x^e^, xi^e^ et xii^e^ Siècles. Dabry de Thiersant, *Le Mahométisme en Chine*, vol. i, p. 73.

[2] Dabry de Thiersant, *Le Mahométisme en Chine*, vol. i, pp. 77–80.

[3] For a fuller account of Ibn Báṭúṭa's visit, see Broomhall, *Islám in China*, pp. 53–5.

molested, they enjoy liberty, but are regarded as strangers. In some provinces they are very numerous.' He does not give an early enough date for the first arrivals in China. A still later writer (A. D. 1735) describes the Muslims as living in peace, increasing their numbers by alliances and marriages and by the care of orphans. He attributes their peaceful condition to the fact that they made no attempt to make converts.[1]

The oldest mosque in China was constructed in Canton by Wahháb Ibn Abú Kabsháh, in A. D. 628 or 629. The roof was similar to that of a pagoda, and at the entrance was a tablet with the Chinese inscription: 'Long life, very long life, to the Emperor.' Suspended on the white walls were texts from the Qur'án, written on silk or paper. The Maulavís had a school close by. Arabic inscriptions were also written on the walls, of which this is a sample—'God ever exists. There is no God but He. Adore Him, pray to Him that your heart may always be with Him. Implore Him to protect you and all the universe.' Engraven on a stone are the words: 'God most high has said: "He only should visit the mosques who believeth in God and the last day and observeth prayer."[2] The Prophet, on whom be peace, has said: "Whosoever constructs a mosque, God will build for him seventy thousand palaces in Paradise."' This mosque was destroyed by fire in A. D. 1341, but was rebuilt with great splendour. It seems to have been damaged several times, for a long

[1] Dabry de Thiersant, *Le Mahométisme en Chine*, . 57.
[2] Súratu't-Tauba (ix) 18.

inscription,[1] on the occasion of a restoration of it in 1699, speaks of its destruction and restoration many times in the past.

Professor Vasilyeff writing in 1867, says that there were then in Pekin alone 20,000 Muslim families, containing 100,000 persons, and that there were thirteen mosques in that city.[2] Another writer, in 1873, states that the Muslims were prosperous merchants, in a flourishing condition. M. de Thiersant in 1878 computed the total number of Muslims to be 20,000,000, scattered about in various parts of the Empire.[3] This is not an extraordinary number when we remember that some fourteen centuries have passed since the first Muslims settled in the country. This they often did in plague-stricken and deserted districts, which they took possession of, and then increased their number by the purchase of children of indigent parents and by taking concubines from amongst the Chinese women. In a famine which ravaged the district of Chan-Tong, they bought more

[1] These inscriptions in mosques and on old tombs throw much light on the history of Islám in China. Translations of many of them are given by Dabry de Thiersant in *Le Mahométisme en Chine*, vol. i, pp. 94–112.

[2] Later writers consider that the Muslim population in Pekin is much less, though some say there are over thirty mosques there.

[3] It was thought that about fifteen millions were in the Provinces of Kansu and Shensi: that before the massacres in Yunan there were four millions there and that the rest were scattered here and there making about 20,000,000; but later writers think this number much too high. Some authorities would place it as low as 4,000,000, whilst others place it at 10,000,000. The probable number lies somewhere between these two extremes. See Broomhall, *Islám in China*, chapter xii.

than ten thousand infants whom they brought up as artisans and as agriculturists.[1]

The Muslims are convinced that the future lies with them, and that, sooner or later, the religion of Muḥammad will prevail in the extreme East and replace the various forms of paganism. Professor Vasilyeff is evidently of the same opinion, and views the position with much alarm. He says: 'The question whether China will become Muslim is one of great interest to the entire world. If China should be converted to Islám, then the political relation of the whole east would be considerably modified. The religion of Islám, extending from Gibralter to the Pacific Ocean, might be a new menace to Christendom, and the peaceful activity of the Chinese, profitable to the nations, might, in the hands of fanatics, become a yoke upon the neck of other peoples, and the march of civilization would be arrested.'[2] Dabry de Thiersant says that these remarks made a great impression, and that they really expressed the feelings of the Russian Government.

At the time these words were written, there were successful Muslim rebellions, and Ya'qúb Beg then set up an independent kingdom in Yarkand, and was recognized by Russia, Great Britain and Turkey. He seems to have proved a good administrator. Muslims elsewhere looked with interest on what seemed likely to become a strong Muslim State in Central Asia. This state of things naturally lead writers of the period to

[1] Du Halde, quoted by Dabry de Thiersant in *Le Mahométisme en Chine*, vol. i, p. 40.

[2] Quoted by Dabry de Thiersant in *Le Mahométisme en Chine*, vol. i, p. ii.

express alarm and accounts for the pessimistic views of Vasilyeff. The Chinese, however, reconquered the country and with the death of Ya'qúb Beg in A. D. 1877 this Muslim kingdom came to an end. So whilst we do not accept the view that there was any real danger to China's becoming a Muslim State, yet, if the statement is correct that Russia then viewed the alleged increase of the power of Islám in China as a coming danger, it would account for some of the past actions of the Russian Government. Years ago Dabry de Thiersant described China as in a state of decay, lying at the mercy of the first great Power which might covet her riches, and pointed out the danger of Muslims, in the coming ruin, forming separate states in some of the provinces. Recent events show that whatever reason they may have been in years gone by for such a forecast, no such danger now exists. Islám has had its day of opportunity in China and has failed. Its numerical progress after nearly thirteen centuries has been slow and small; affording a further illustration of the difficulty its propagation, unless aided by force, meets with in countries possessing a higher civilization than it brings.

The Muslims differ both in character and in physiognomy from the Chinese proper, and show clearly that they are a mixed race. The Arab, Tatar and Chinese blood may be traced, though all are so blended as to form a new type. The original source was the band of 4,000 soldiers who early settled in the country. Three centuries later, when the conquest of Jenghis Khán opened up a way of communication between the east and the west, many Syrians, Arabs and Persians came to China. Some were merchants, some soldiers, and all

more or less settlers. They were men strong in physique, active in habits, and they soon established themselves in the various localities in which they settled. These strangers, envied by the people of the country for the political freedom they enjoyed, possessed every facility for increasing their numbers. Descendants of Chinese women, the present mass of Chinese Muslims bear marked traces of a foreign origin, though this is much more pronounced in some provinces than in others. Generally speaking, where they are not numerous, it is not so easy to distinguish them by their features from the rest of the people. The Muslim women, though not so tall as the men, are, generally speaking, more robust and vigorous than the Chinese women. The feet are small, owing to the adoption of Chinese customs, but the lower classes do not cramp the feet of their children. As a race, these Chinese Muslims unite the good and the bad qualities of the Chinese, the Arabs, and the Turks, though they are less bigoted than the latter. Their religion reduces itself to belief in a few articles of faith, to the practice of circumcision and to the abstention from eating pork. Only a very few of their leaders make the pilgrimage to Mecca. They read the Qur'án in Arabic without understanding its meaning. They prefer the occupation of arms and commerce to the cultivation of the arts and sciences. They are very clannish, and are reputed to be honest. As magistrates they are held in great respect, being looked up to as impartial and just in their decisions. Owing to the unity which binds them together, and also to the concessions they make to the prejudices of the Chinese people, they enjoy the same rights and privileges as other subjects, and are not

treated as a foreign body. They are agriculturists artisans, merchants, and even officials, if they are qualified for such a position. They wear the Chinese dress, but the queue, when worn is generally concealed under the cap.

The head dress varies in different parts. In the province of Kansu, white and black caps are worn, and this is said to have been the cause of a revolt, the white caps being the symbol of a more tolerant spirit, resented by the others as a departure from orthodoxy. Some say that the colours represent the ancient feud between the Umaiya and the 'Abbásides, but D 'Ollone considers that as the custom is not referred to in any edict before A.D. 1781, it has no connexion with early Arab disputes between Sunnís and Shí'ahs, and that it is simply a local custom.[1]

Their mosques are not prominent buildings, and the minarets are kept low so as not to excite the superstition of the people. They assist at popular fêtes, and contribute to things in which they have no special interest.

As regards their relation to the State, Chinese Muslims inculcate loyalty to the Emperor, and conform, in a way unusual for Muslims, to certain practices of the State religion. That religion is made up of certain rites and ceremonies performed by the Emperor, and the functionaries who undertake the duties of priests. Sacrifices are offered to propitiate the superior powers. The public officials have to take part in these observances. In prostrating themselves before the Emperor, they are careful not to let the head actually touch the

[1] *Recherches sur les Musulmans Chinois*, p. 312.

ground which it would do in prostrating before God in prayer. Thus they satisfy their consciences that they have not performed an act of worship. The Muslim functionaries, though they regard the whole of the official ceremonies as ridiculous and superstitious, conform to the law in their own interest and in that of their community. They know that such concessions to paganism are absolutely opposed to the iconoclastic system of Islám, but they yield to the temptation and hope that under the peculiar circumstances of the case they may receive pardon.[1]

The Chinese Muslims require that animals used for food should be killed in the orthodox fashion. The funeral ceremonies accord with Muslim customs. They prohibit the use of tobacco. Authorities differ as to their use of opium in smoking. Gambling and games are

[1] 'Les functionnaires Mahometans, quoiqu'ils considèrent ces cérémonies comme ridicules et superstitieuses, out préféré se conformer à la loi, et se contentent, quand ces obligations leur sont imposées, de faire *in petto* des restrictions que leur foi concilie avec leurs propres intérêts et ceux de leurs correligionnaires. Ces concessions sont, sans donte, loin d'être d'accord avec l'islamisme. Mais ils les regardent comme absolument nécessaries à leur cause, et ils sont convaincus, dans leur âme et conscience, qu' Allah leur pardonnera, en raison des difficultés et de l'importance du but qu'ils poursuivent, cette transgression flagrante de la loi.' (Dabry de Thiersant, *Le Mahométisme en Chine*, vol. ii, p. 174.) They have Qur'ánic authority for the compromise they make in the verse: 'Whoso after he hath believed in God denieth him, if he were forced to it and if his heart remain steadfast in the Faith, *shall be guiltless*' [Súratu'n-Naḥl (xvi) 108.] The commentators add the words in italics to complete the sense. For an account of the occasion which called forth the revelation, see Sell, *Life of Muḥammad* (C.L.S.), p. 48.

illegal, but they evade this by saying that the Prophet only forbade games of hazard, and allowed draughts and chess, which depend on the skill of the player. As a matter of fact, dice, cards, and betting at cock-fights are common, and the Muslims equally with other Chinese are gamblers. Usury is prohibited. Musical instruments must not be used in private or in public. Vocal music also is improper, though passages from the Qur'án may be chanted at the time of prayer. Dancing is altogether wrong. It is also forbidden to make statues of men or figures of animals: but photographs are allowed. [1] Astrology, divinations, magic, and all calculations based on auguries and dreams, are utterly condemned. In this respect the Muslims have not fallen under the spell of the Chinese custom and practice in these matters. Amongst themselves they use the ordinary Muslim salutations, but to outsiders they use the form common to all. They accept the Sunna as a rule of faith, and their law is based on this and on the traditions, on the unanimous consent of the early disciples and on analogical reasoning. These are technically called the Sunna, Ijmá' and Qiyás.[2]

Education is regulated partly by the Islámic law, and partly by the State system. At the age of four years, four months, and four days, a lad begins to read the Qur'án by rote. This is called the Bismilláh. When he is about seven years old his general education begins.

[1] It is sometimes said that as the sunlight does this and not man, this pictorial representation of the human form does not come under the prohibitive law.

[2] For a full explanation of these terms, see Sell, *Faith of Islám* (3rd ed.), pp. 19-40.

The mosque schools are adapted to this purpose, and the Chinese, Arabic, and Persian languages are taught. This education is carried on till the young man is twenty-one years old. Later on, provided he passes the necessary examinations, he can enter the service of the State. If the lad is to devote his life to some manual trade the course of education is different. Girls do not receive a general education.

In each mosque a tablet is suspended on which a Chinese inscription is written, indicating a wish that the Emperor may live for an indefinite time. This is regarded as an official authorization of the erection of the mosque. The tablet is placed near the entrance to the mosque and is either removed, or is covered over during a religious service by a paper on which the name of God is written. The worshippers on entering must bow to it. 'Various expedients are resorted to show that the outward form of worship is done under protest, or is regarded as invalid because imperfectly performed. Some will content themselves by bowing at the side. . . . These things they regard as accidental and not essential evils.'[1] The mosques have no minarets, and the Mu'adhdhin announces prayer from the front entrance, and not, as usual elsewhere, from an elevated position. This is done in order not to excite the prejudices of the Chinese people. There are no convents or monasteries in China. There are, however, centres where young men are trained as Mullás.[2] The Imám and the Mu'adhdhin live separately. They enjoy a certain portion of the revenue of the mosque to which they are attached. In

[1] Broomhall, *Islám in China*, p. 228.

[2] *The Chinese Recorder*, February, 1913, p. 77.

some provinces a certain amount of authority is accorded to them over the Muslim people in matters of religion, but they have no coercive jurisdiction and cases of dispute ultimately go before the Chinese authorities.

In discussions with the learned on religious matters they are careful to say that they differ from Confucianism chiefly in matters of a personal nature, such as marriage and funeral rites, ceremonial ablutions, and the prohibition of pork, wine,[1] and games of chance. The results is that Islám is looked upon by the Chinese as a religion similar in many points to their own. A Chinese writer of the eighteenth century says: 'The Arab religion prescribes for the worship of the Supreme that which Confucius did for the Chang-Ty, and borrows from Buddhism what concerns prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and certain religious ceremonies.'

Syed Ajal Shamsu'd-Dín, also called 'Umar, was a man of remarkable skill as an administrator. His biography has been reproduced in a recent French work—D'Ollone's *Recherches sur les Musulmans Chinois* (Paris 1911), pp. 25–181, from which I have taken a few interesting facts, illustrating the life and work of this great man, who died in A.D. 1297. Originally the commander of the royal guard of Jenghis Khán, he became in time the financial minister of Kublai Khán by whom he was appointed Governor of Yunnan, where he made his great reputation. The Emperor on appointing him laid stress on the need of a pacific administration which would give tranquillity to the people.

[1] Pork, when called mutton, is sometimes eaten and the use of wine is not unknown. Broomhall, *Islám in China*, p. 225.

Syed Ajil loyally obeyed the instructions given to him. By peaceful means he gained the goodwill of the people and obtained such influence than in less than six years a good general administration was established in the whole province of Yunnan. He paid much attention to the improvement of agriculture and made extensive irrigation works. He built public granaries for the storage of grain from which supplies were issued to the cultivators. In order to safeguard the people from the dangers of floods, he arranged for a supply of watchmen who gave timely notice of any danger. He established military colonies for the protection of the country, and built rest-houses for the convenience of travellers. He also paid attention to the improvement of the manners and customs of the people, established schools for the education of the young and something of the nature of alms-houses for the aged poor. He was one of the most remarkable men of his age and did much to commend Islám to the people over whom he ruled so wisely and so well.

Islám was introduced into the Yunnan province in A. D. 1275, and soon spread very rapidly. This was probably due to the permanent residence there of the Turkoman soldiers of Kublai Khán, whose trusted official, Syed Ajal Shamsu'd-Dín, as we have just seen, became the first viceroy of Yunnan, now incorporated into the Chinese Empire as a province. There were occasional tumults, but, on the whole, the people lived happily together, and with the exception of a revolt in Canton in the eighth century, no disturbances seem to have taken place until modern times under the Manchu dynasty. The first revolt in Yunnan took place in A.D. 1818, owing to

the lack of justice and the destruction of a mosque. In 1828 and from 1834 to 1840, the Muslims lived in troublesome times. The cause of all these tumults was the bad government of the Mandarins, and when the tumults were put down it was with a barbarity which led, at the earliest opportunity, to bitter reprisals.[1] In a petition by a leading Muslim to the Emperor all this is set forth in detail. The writer goes on to say that the Muslims have lived for a long time in China, have been loyal subjects and ever ready to defend the Empire, that now all his relatives have been massacred and he remains alone and lonely. The Mandarins refuse to listen to his complaints and so he appeals to the Emperor, on whose justice all Muslims trust. The Emperor, in reply, rebuked the Viceroy of Yunnan and reminded him that the Muslims were children of the State, even as others were, and that equal justice must be meted out to all.[2] A period of peace ensued until 1855, when a great insurrection broke out which lasted until 1874, and in which about two millions Muslims perished. The origin of the trouble was the massacre of sixteen hundred men, women and children, because two Chinese officials were annoyed when the Muslims claimed a just debt from the one, and refused to subscribe to purchase an umbrella of honour for the other. The barbarity shown on both sides was great. Cities and villages ceased to exist and a recent writer[3] says: 'The ruins

[1] For a full and detailed account, see Broomhall, *Islám in China*, chapter viii.

[2] See Thiersant, *Le Mahométisme en Chine*, vol. i, p. 122.

[3] J. McCarthy, *The Chinese Empire*, quoted by Broomhall, *Islám in China*, p. 144.

still to be seen tell the sad tale of how fearful the struggle must have been.' Peace was restored at last, but the whole country has been wasted and one-fourth of its inhabitants have perished, or have emigrated. The Muslims have again settled down quietly, but have no hope for the future, and Dabry de Thiersant, looking at the subject from a French standpoint, saw in the adjoining Protectorate of Tonking an opportunity for favourable intercourse with them. He considered that sooner or later, Tonking would become one of the best French Colonies, and that it was to French interests to be on good terms with their neighbours in Yunnan.[1]

There is a very curious legend as to the way in which Islám was introduced into the province of Tou-Kiue, about the middle of the tenth century of the Christian era. A ruler, named Satoc, was as a minor, under the authority of his uncle Hárún. One day Satoc when hunting pursued a wounded hare, which seeing Satoc all alone turned and said to him: 'Come, my child, attend to me. Why dost thou remain an idolater, why dost thou not believe in God and in Muḥammad the Apostle of God. I pity you, I do not wish you to go to hell.' Satoc in alarm said: 'How can I be saved?' The Sage, again speaking through the hare, said: 'Repeat simply the words, "There is no god but God

[1] 'La France a un beau rôle à jouer dans l'Indo-Chine, seulement, si elle veut réussir, il faut qu'elle se pénètre bien d'abord de ce qu'elle veut. L'objectif une fois déterminé, il lui sera facile ensuite d'atteindre son but, en étudiant sérieusement les résultats gigantesques obtenus par les Anglais dans l'Inde, et en sachant profiter des leçons du passé.' Dabry de Thiersant, *Le Mahométisme en Chine*, vol. i, p. 151.

and Muḥammad is the Apostle of God"; repeat these words, and you will become a Muslim, will go to Paradise and enjoy all its sensuous pleasures; refuse to do this and you go to the torments of hell.' Satoc forthwith repeated the creed, became a Muslim and asked for further instruction. The Sage, saying that a wise teacher would soon come to him, suddenly disappeared. Some days after a traveller, named Abú Naṣr Samani, came and for six months further instructed Satoc. His uncle Hárún was very angry and wished to put him to death, but before doing so devised a plan by which to test his faith. He ordered him to lay the first stone of a temple. Satoc was advised by Abú Naṣr to consent, with the mental reservation that he was laying it for a mosque and not for an idol temple. Soon after a civil war ensued. Hárún was killed by Satoc who by the sword spread Islám far and wide, making, it is said, thousands of converts in a day.[1] The successors of Satoc were good Muslims and prescribed all other religions except Islám and Nestorianism. It was Jenghis Khán who, in invading this province, proclaimed religious liberty.

The Muslims in China enjoy the same rights and privileges as all the other subjects of the Emperor. All occupations and all offices are open to them, if they have the means and the capacity required. At the same time they take great care not to wound the susceptibilities, or to arouse the prjeudices of the earnest disciples of

[1] Dabry de Thiersant says: 'il passa sa vie à guerroyer pour répandre par le sabre la doctrine du Prophete.' *Le Mahométisme en Chine*, vol. i, p. 218.

Confucius. They respect the laws of the Empire and the usages and customs of the people. The Government has, as a rule, shown itself favourable to Islám; and at different periods has issued decrees to the effect that Islám has a good object, that it observes natural and social laws, and that the differences it presents to other religions only concern simple questions of national usage. In A.D. 1289, the Emperor Houpilie established at Peking an Imperial college for Muslims, which shows how strong their influence was, even in the capital of the Empire. At the beginning of the fourteenth century the great Arab traveller, Ibn Báṭúṭa, speaks of the great number of Muslims he found in China. In A. D. 1384, the Emperor Tai-Tson ordered the following statement to be engraved on a tablet: 'The Arab books explain the creation of the universe. The founder of Islám was a great saint, born in the west, he received from heaven thirty volumes of a book which has enlightened the world. He is a great king, the first of saints. He protected kingdoms and their people. He prescribed five daily prayers (namáz) and also mental ones (du'a). The foundation of his doctrine is the worship of the true God. He encouraged the poor, consoled the unfortunate, penetrated into things obscure, and blessed the living. The doctrine conforms to those of antiquity and of the present.'

In A. D. 1730 the Emperor Yung-Shing severely blamed a judge who had reported evil of the Muslims, and said: 'The Muḥammadans are all the children of the soil and belong to the Chinese family. I intend that they shall have religious liberty, for, in common with the other subjects of the Empire, they respect the laws.

Religion is an affair of the conscience, with which no one should interfere.'

In the year 1731 the same Emperor in the interests of agriculture, prohibited the slaughter of cows for food. The Muḥammadans represented to him that, as they could not eat pork, they would be put to much inconvenience. He replied to them in an imperial decree, of which the following is an extract: 'In all the provinces of the Empire there have been for many centuries a great number of Muḥammadans, who form part of my people, and like the rest are my children. I make no difference between them and those who do not belong to their religion. I have often received from some officials complaints against them, because their religion differs from that of the Chinese, because they speak a different language and wear a different dress. They accuse them of disobedience and urge me to take strict measures against them. After examination, I find these charges groundless. The religion which they practise is that of their ancestors. Their language differs from ours, but then there are diverse dialects in China. The difference in their temples, dress, and manners is of no consequence. They bear good characters and show no signs of revolting. So long as they observe the social and civil laws they shall have religious freedom. The magistrates are not to deal with religious matters. In the interests of agriculture I have prohibited the killing of cows; some Muslims object on the ground that they require beef for food. It is a grave fault to disobey the Emperor. No good religion allows any one to injure others. Let the Muslims exhort themselves, correct this evil, and all will be well. I permit them freedom in the

exercise of their religion; they, on the other hand, must respect the laws of the country of which they are adopted children.'[1]

An imperial decree about the same date speaks of the many Muslims who came to the State examinations, and of the good conduct of those who had become officials in the Empire. A judge who had reported evil of them was degraded. The Chinese Musalmáns, thus allowed freedom in the exercise of their religion, have lived in the same way as the other inhabitants of the country. They submit to the same charges, enjoy the same rights, yet, whilst casting in their lot with the other subjects of the Empire, have, as regards their religious position and their personal laws, remained a distinct community.

The Chinese term for Muslim, given about the thirteenth century, is Hoey-Hoey, or Hoey-Tsee,[2] which means 'return and submission', in accordance with the verse in the Qur'án which says: 'Verily, we are God's, and to Him shall we return.'[3] In the annals of the dynasty of the Mongols (A. D. 1260 to 1368) this is the name given to Muslim converts. The Muḥammadans call themselves Mu'minún (believers), and Muslimún

[1] Dabry de Thiersant, *Le Mahométisme en Chine*, vol. i, pp. 154–6.

[2] For a curious discussion as to the derivation of this word see, M. Gabriel Devéria's essay in *Centenaire de L'École des Langues Orientales Vivantes*, p. 103. One writer on the ground that in Chinese H. before O. may be equal to Kh, derives the word from يا خوى my brother: the plural form is اخوان shortened to Khuan—a technical term for the brethren in a religious Order. See also Broomhall, *Islám in China*, chapter x.

[3] إنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَ إنَّا إلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 151.

(Muslims). The name given to the religion (dín) of Islám is Hoey-Hoey-Kiao or Tsin-Tching-Kiao, the true and pure religion. This last name dates from A. D. 1335, and its use was formally authorized by the then Emperor. The most ancient mosque is called Tsin-Kiao-Sze, the temple of the pure religion. The ordinary mosques are called Ly-Pay-Sze, temples of the ritual ceremonies. Muḥammadan writings are called Hoey-Hoey-Chou, a name applied to Arabic books and to Persian ones written in Arabic characters. On the frontier the old Turkish language is used in books.

The majority of the Chinese Muslims are Sunnís of the Ḥanífí madhab, or sect.[1] As regards the main dogmas of the orthodox creed, the erroneous views about the Christian creed, the person of Jesus Christ and the Bible, they are in agreement with their co-religionists elsewhere; but in speculative and philosophical questions they have been influenced by Buddhist and Confucian teaching. Living isolated for twelve centuries, in the midst of idolaters, and under a suspicious Government, the prejudices of which had to be duly considered and deprived of all facilities for reinvigorating their faith at the sanctuaries of their ancient saints, they have cultivated a humbler and more tolerant spirit than is common amongst Muslims in other eastern lands.

They have never been able in China to assert with boldness that Islám is the one, absolute religion, outside of which there is no salvation. They have enjoyed equal civil rights with others, have qualified for and

[1] Strictly speaking the term madhab is applied to the canonical schools of law, of which the Ḥanífí system is one of the four. See *Faith of Islám* (3rd ed.), pp. 31-6.

held official positions, involving conformity to certain national laws and customs contrary to the spirit of Islám, and necessitating the close study of certain philosophical doctrines alien to the teaching of Muḥammad. The result is that a certain laxness in practice has been permitted, and that the dogmatic system has been influenced by philosophic ideas taken from other religions.

Briefly stated, the cosmogony of the Chinese Muslims is that when all was void and non-existent, one true Lord existed by His own essential nature. As regards His substance, will and actions, He cannot be compared with any other being. From this two uncreated marvels emanated: first, the mandate (the Kalám, or Word, of the Ṣúfís), which is a communication from the real substance; and second, reason of which again all material forms are but emanations. The nature of man is said to be the nearest approach to that of God.

The primordial material principle was divided into the male and female agencies. The former was active, the latter in repose. These were then transformed into water and fire, and from the combination of these air and earth were born. By an eruption of air and fire the sky and the stars were formed: earth and air met together and land and sea were produced. The sky and the earth having been thus formed, fire and water commenced their natural work of the nourishment of created things. The four elements combined to form minerals and animals. The vegetable kingdom was the product of air and fire, combined with the nutritive properties of earth and water. The creation of man was the result of the union in the primordial material principle of the male and female energies, combined with the will of the True One.

The Chinese Muslims believe in angels and genii, beings spiritual and invisible to man. Their forms are perfect, their beauty unsurpassed, their youth perpetual. They have no carnal appetites or passions, and do not feel the pangs of hunger or of thirst. Their functions are to praise God continually and to transmit His orders rapidly; to watch over men, to record their actions in a book and to intercede with God for them; to regulate the movements of the earth, the moon, the planets, seasons, plants and animals. The four chief ones are Gabriel who reveals the mysteries of God to prophets; Michá'íl, who directs the elements; Azrá'íl, the angel of death; Isráfíl, the guardian of the trumpet and the announcer of the day of judgement. Munkir and Nakír are the angels who examine the corpse in the tomb with regard to its faith when on earth. Genii are divided into two classes: those who believe in Islám and are good, those who do not and who dwell in eternal fire.

The 'Arsh, or throne of God, is in the ninth heaven, the Kursi,[1] or seat, in the eighth, and each has many constellations around it. The seven lower heavens contain each one planet, and each has its own special function. The heaven of the planet Jupiter manifests those things which are hidden; the heaven of the planet Mars sets forth the advent of evils and dangers; the heaven of the Sun is the source of animal and vegetable vitality and of the changing seasons, climate and weather; the heaven of the planet Venus influences the human voice, smell, taste and form; the heaven of the planet Mercury makes

[1] The 'Arsh and the Kursi were the first things which were created, then followed the eight heavens and the seven hells. Dabry de Thiersant, *Le Mahométisme en Chine*, vol. ii, p. 77.

dull things clear, and dark things bright; the heaven of the Moon affects the tides; the augmentation and diminution of troubles also depend on it. All created things return to the True One. He entirely fills the earth, embraces fully the heavens, and at last all things return to the great original of all.

God created the world in six days. Adam and Eve were placed in a garden, and were told not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree. The Devil, angry because he had been ordered to prostrate himself before Adam, determined to ruin the two by making them disobedient. As he could not enter Paradise he called upon a peacock for aid. The peacock referred him to a serpent, who consented to assist him. Then follows the ordinary account of the Fall, which came about by the eating of forbidden fruit. Adam was banished to the east, Eve to the west. For three hundred years they lived apart and in darkness. At last, in mercy, God dispelled the darkness and ordered Adam to make two rak'ats, or prostrations made in repeating the prayers, after which he gained some strength. Then the sun shone forth brightly, and four more rak'ats were made, and four prayers were said, and all trouble passed away. At noon, at three in the afternoon, and at night, prayers were said, and hence the origin of the fivefold daily prayers, or namáz. An angel soon conducted Adam to Eve, who was then on Mount 'Arafát, not far from Mecca. Other angels brought a tent from Paradise and placed it on a spot where in after days the Ka'ba was erected. God then taught Adam the true religion of Islám. This instruction Adam passed on to his descendants. Noah, after the flood, did the same. In the earliest days of the Chinese

Empire, Islám was the recognized religion, but a period of ignorance set in and it was entirely forgotten. In Arabia alone was the true tradition preserved even unto the time of Muḥammad, by men specially qualified to do it. They may be divided into four classes. First, those who received a revelation, these are saints; second, those who received and who taught what was in the sacred books; third, those who were allowed to add to or take from the teaching of previous saints and who were the heads of their respective dispensations—such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus; fourth, those who could sum up all preceding dispensations and establish a final law. These are the highest of all saints, and there is only one such, Muḥammad, the seal of the prophets. The Chinese Mullás appear to accept as true, the marvelous traditional accounts of the birth and infancy of the Prophet.

The Muḥammadans believe in the salvation of Muslims only; but the Chinese Muḥammadans say that of non-Muslims one man in a thousand and one woman in ten thousand will get salvation. They further teach that as Eve was created from a bone taken from the left side of Adam,[1] and as the left side is inferior to the right one, women are worse than men. They tempt men to neglect religious duties and lead them astray. Women are said to love three things only—those who flatter them, their pleasure, and their own children.

[1] Another form of this tradition used against female education is that the bone, being a rib bone, was bent, and so the disposition of woman is by nature crooked, and any attempt by education to improve it is clearly contrary to the natural order of things.

The Chinese Muslims hold that all physical actions are the result of the immutable decrees of God, that moral acts depend on the will of the individual, who is free to choose. Each man is born with a different nature, but, whatever that nature may be, he does not the less possess the faculty of thinking and acting, according to his own will, subordinate to the power of God. The Chinese Muḥammadans are, then, practically what is known in Muslim theology as Qadrians. Of late years a few men have arisen with wider views, answering somewhat to the modernist school in India and Egypt, but their influence is very slight.[1]

The books composed and published by the Chinese Muslims are not sold publicly, owing to the suspicious character of the Government and the prejudices of the literary classes. As their chief religious books are in Arabic, they have not done much to create a national Muslim literature. A great many knew nothing but Chinese and the Muslim literature in that language is not important. It is said that the first Muḥammadan book published in Chinese appeared in 1642, and that it was written in order to show the points in common between Islám and Confucianism. In 1662 a large work was written, expounding the faith as made known by the early Muslim historians and theologians. At the commencement of the eighteenth century, the author Lieon Tsee published works on the biography of the Prophet and on dogmatic theology. These are still the standard works on Islám. This writer has, however, been reproached for making too many concessions to the

[1] See *The Chinese Recorder*, February, 1913, p. 76.

opinions of the learned men amongst the followers of Confucius.[1] Works in Arabic and in Persian with Chinese translations also appear from time to time.

In recent years 'Ulamá, or learned men, sent by the late Sulṭán of Turkey have come to China, and in 1908 toured through the country preaching Pan-Islámic doctrine. They were esteemed for their learning but not, as they wished to be, as the delegates of the Khalífa, for the Chinese Muslims do not accept the Sultán as the spiritual head of the Muslim world.[2]

From the above statements it will be seen that Muslims in China possess much religious liberty, though occasionally restricted after rebellions; but they purchase whatever liberty they enjoy by conforming to pagan practices and ceremonial, and by a subserviency to the prejudices of the State officials and of the literary classes, in a manner not usual amongst their co-religionists in other lands. Under the Republic, their position may be changed and their petitions for increased freedom may be acceded to. It is not likely, however, that they will have any very important share in the shaping of events in the near or distant future. As regards their dogmatic beliefs they may be classed as orthodox Muslims, but they are certainly lax and time-serving in their conduct and relation to others of an alien faith. Now and again they have broken out into

[1] 'It is a noteworthy fact, and a testimony to the beneficent influence of Confucian ethics that none of the Chinese Moslem books contain any reference to the characteristic paradise of the Koran', Broomhall, *Islám in China*, p. 232.

[2] See D'Ollone, *Recherches sur les Musulmans Chinois*, p. 374.

rebellion, but, notwithstanding what men like Professor Vasilyeff may say, it seems very doubtful whether a body of men, who for many centuries have conformed to customs repugnant to the true Muslim, can ever become a political force producing a disturbing element in the State, or are at all likely to prove a hostile power in the future developments of the Chinese Republic.

For some reason or other no systematic missionary work has been carried on amongst them, and yet such a large body of Muslims in the far East should not be overlooked by the societies at work in China. It should be taken up as a serious matter and worked as a special department. Mr. Broomhall's excellent book *Islâm in China* calls attention to the need, and doubtless will contribute largely to its being met.

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